Awards night at Company of Gardeners Installation Dinner

Wednesday 2 July, 2014

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Press release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 ON FRIDAY 4 JULY 2014

HRH The Earl of Wessex KG, GCVO receives his Past Master badge as Mr Stephen G Bernhard FI Hort is installed as the new Master of the Company, and Sheffield University student in horticulture, Katie Benallick, is awarded the Prince of Wales Trophy 2014

Following tradition, to mark the end of his year at the helm of The Worshipful Company of Gardeners during 2013/14, HRH The Earl of Wessex KG, GCVO has received his Past Master badge at a dinner held in the City of London, on Thursday 3 July 2014.

Over the last 12 months, the Royal Master has presided over a full and active year of events centred on gardening and horticulture, including the judging and presentation of a new annual award, the Prince Edward Trophy for Excellence in Horticultural and Career Development, to Mr and Mrs Jody Scheckter for their organic farming work at Laverstoke Park, a visit to see private and public gardens and nurseries on the Channel Island of Jersey, and the **dedication of the diamond-shaped Jubilee Wood** of mixed indigenous trees planted by the Company on the Royal estate at Windsor to celebrate HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

His Royal Highness is succeeded as Master by Stephen G Bernhard FI Hort, whose year of tenure began this evening with the **presentation of the annual Prince of Wales Trophy for Sustainable Horticulture to Katie Benallick**.

Katie is currently undertaking a Masters degree in Landscape at Sheffield University, with a dissertation that focuses on the effectiveness of a new, re-cycleable plant pot design. She is also working at RHS Wisley as a Trials Horticulturist.

When asked by the judges why she favours sustainable horticulture, she said that it "just makes sense". She attended Atlantic College in South Wales and whilst there, she learned about the ethos of sustainability as propounded by the United World College movement, and found it to be an important source of inspiration for her work.

She followed her college studies with a gap year, during which she taught in Kenya and worked on an environmental sustainability project in Mexico, where she monitored the local reefs. From the there, she progressed to an undergraduate programme in Horticulture and Environmental Management at the University of Reading.

Since completing that programme, Katie has gone on to work in the University of Oxford Botanic Garden, and then, the gardens of RHS Wisley. She had a placement at Great Dixter and used an RHS bursary to work at the Eden Project. She has also done volunteer work for Thrive and Sage Greenfingers. Katie is a "Young Hort Ambassador" and was asked to speak at the Chelsea Flower Show President's Lunch in 2013. She is a Member of the Institute of Horticulture and a worthy winner of this prize.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

For more information and images, please contact the Clerk of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, 020 7149 6696, clerk@gardenerscompany.com

About The Worshipful Company of Gardeners

This Guild is known to have existed as a Fraternity since 1345, and was incorporated by Letters Patent (Charter) on 18th September 1605, by James I. In 1891, the Company was granted its Livery, and accorded the seniority number 66 among the City's Guilds.The Company is actively involved in the City of London – in the past century, more of its members have been Lord Mayor than from any other Company - participating in the election of the City of London officers each year, and working to promote gardening and horticulture within the City; perhaps its best known activity on this front is its Flowers in the

City Campaign, launched more than 40 years ago in conjunction with the City Corporation as a means of helping to brighten the City, and encourage floral display in summer and winter.

For more details about the Company, visit www.gardenerscompany.com

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